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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. On 10 December 1996, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 51/46 B, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific". In paragraph 5 of that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

II. Activities of the Centre from August 1996 to July 1997

3. The Secretary-General believes that the mandate of the Regional Centre remains valid and that the Centre could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region in the post-cold-war era. Indeed, consultations carried out by the Director of the Centre with Member States and scholars within and outside the region as well as meetings organized by the Centre have confirmed the continuing support for the Centre's role in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building and the promotion of disarmament and security. In this connection, the usefulness of regional meetings organized by the Centre has been widely recognized.

4. In line with this approach, and within the limited financial resources available during the reporting period, the Centre was able to organize two major regional meetings at Kathmandu, and at Sapporo, Japan, respectively. The entire cost of both meetings was financed from voluntary contributions of Member States and interested organizations.

5. The first of the two meetings, on nuclear disarmament in the post-Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty era, was held at Kathmandu from 24 to 26 February 1997. The meeting, the ninth in its series, was attended by 32 representatives from Governments, research institutes, the mass media and non-governmental organizations. The meeting considered priorities in nuclear disarmament such as a strengthened review process on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty fissile cut-off negotiations and security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It also dealt with region-specific issues, including a review of existing confidence-building measures, the illicit flow of small weapons and comparability of military data and information. Major presentations made at the meeting will be published by the Centre.

6. The regional dialogue promoted by the Centre through the annual meetings in the region has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process" as reflected in General Assembly resolutions. The continuation of this process as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring region-oriented solutions has gained the strong support of Member States and academic groups within the region. Strong support has also been expressed for the idea of creating a close network, linking the Centre and its interlocutors within the region, as a way of exchanging data and information related to disarmament and security. The Secretary-General is gratified with the continued political and financial support given to the Kathmandu process in the region.

7. It should be noted that, in recognition of the importance of the Kathmandu process, the Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region (CSCAP), an organization of academic and research institutes in Asia and the Pacific, has amended its charter so as to grant observer status to the Centre, the first observer admitted.

8. The second regional event was a United Nations conference on disarmament issues entitled "New Agenda for Disarmament and Regional Security", held at Sapporo, Japan, from 22 to 25 July 1997, and organized by the Centre in cooperation with Hokkaido Prefecture and Sapporo City, as well as the Government of Japan. A total of 74 participants and 22 observers from Governments, research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the media within and outside the region attended the conference.

9. The conference addressed specific disarmament measures with a view to searching for common approaches to nuclear disarmament. In keeping with this objective, the conference discussed a new agenda for nuclear disarmament and exchanged views on new initiatives towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The conference also examined topics such as a further reduction in nuclear weapons, the prevention of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and nuclear-weapon-free zones. Interesting discussions took place on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and how to ensure its implementation. The conference also focused on regional security and cooperation in South Asia and North-East Asia as well as maritime arms control. The major papers presented at the conference will be published by the Centre.

10. At the request of the United Nations Association of Japan, the Centre assisted in the organization of a symposium on "North-East Asia Dialogue: The Kanazawa Process", held

at Kanazawa, Japan, from 3 to 5 June 1997. The symposium dealt with many issues related to the subregion, including peace, stability and prosperity in North-East Asia, the security environment in North-East Asia and expansion of concrete engagements in many areas including social and economic cooperation within the region. The Director of the Centre attended the symposium at the invitation of the Association.

11. The Centre published, as the *Kathmandu Process* series 1 and 2, the proceedings of the 1997 Kathmandu regional disarmament meeting on "Priority Issues on the Current Disarmament Agenda" and the 1997 Hiroshima disarmament conference on "Common Efforts towards a Safer Nuclear-Weapon-Free World".

12. In response to a request made by interested delegations, the Centre organized an informal gathering on 2 July 1997 to exchange views on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free State. Discussions focused on the objective and agenda of the proposed international conference on a "Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone", scheduled to be held at Tashkent from 14 to 16 September 1997. The participants agreed to meet again in early October. Delegates from the permanent missions of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyztan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America attended the July gathering in their personal capacities.

13. As a means of promoting cooperation and mutual interaction between the Centre and CSCAP (see para. 7 above), the Director of the Centre attended a meeting of the CSCAP Working Group on Confidence and Security Measures in Asia and the Pacific, held in Washington, D.C., on 21 and 23 May 1997. The meeting held a wide-ranging discussion on the future of nuclear cooperation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and preventive diplomacy.

III. Staffing and financing

14. In accordance with its mandate, all activities of the Centre should be financed from the voluntary contributions of Member States and other interested organizations. In order to use the scarce available resources so far as possible for substantive activities, it was impossible for the Centre to recruit any local support staff. For that reason, the Director continued to operate from United Nations Headquarters in New York, an arrangement that will have to remain in force until a reliable means can be found to finance the Centre's operating costs at Kathmandu. In the meantime, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Information Office at Kathmandu have continued to provide the Centre with logistic support for the meeting held there each year.

15. Since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/51/445), voluntary contributions in the amount of $197,167.57 have been received as of July. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Austria, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand, as well as to Rissho Kosei-Kai, a Japanese non-governmental organization, for their contributions, and to the Government of Nepal for its overall support of the Centre. While appreciating the substantive contributions received, the Secretary-General appeals to Member States to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Centre in order to ensure its viability and enhance its effective functioning.